



## **RHODE ISLAND BAYS, RIVERS, & WATERSHEDS COORDINATION TEAM**

**November 1, 2006  
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
Department of Administration  
Conference Room B  
Providence, Rhode Island**

**Meeting Minutes**  
(approved at 11/28/06 CT monthly meeting)

Coordination Team Members in Attendance: W. Michael Sullivan, Michael Tikoian, Juan Mariscal, Meg Kerr, Saul Kaplan, and Kevin Flynn

Other Meeting Participants: Sue Kiernan, Curt Spalding, Thomas Uva, Chip Young, Pete August, Jeff Willis, Sandra Whitehouse, Lynne Harrington, John Williams, Jane Austin, Gary Ciminero, Don Pryor, Angelo Liberti, Ariana McBride, Kip Bergstrom, and Mike Walker.

Coordination Team Staff: Ames Colt and Melissa Stanziale

### **Colt**

Called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. at the Department of Administration, Conference Room B. Began with scheduling of next two meetings.

### **Sullivan**

Expressed an interest in hearing Paul Pinault's closing remarks about his views as he is retiring from the position of Director of Narragansett Bay Commission.

### **Colt**

Agreed that it would be beneficial to hear this, perhaps at the December meeting, if Pinault is willing. Pinault so agreed to offer some remarks on the Bay Commission and its future challenges at the Coordination Team meeting scheduled for December 20.

It was agreed that the next meeting would be scheduled for Wednesday, November 28, 2006 from 2:00 –4:00 p.m., location to be announced. It was also decided that the following monthly meeting would be held on Wednesday, December 20, 2006 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., location to be announced.

Sought a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the Governor's Bay Summit held on September 26, 2006, with amendments proposed by Meg Kerr. Motion seconded and approved.

Introduced Melissa Stanziale as the CT and CT Chair's new administrative assistant, and announced that, among other duties, she will assume responsibility for meeting the state's open meeting requirements for the CT monthly meetings in place of Chip Young.

Stated there was a lot to cover in order to pull together a FY 2008 proposal for the Governor but offered CT members the opportunity to introduce additional issues to the meeting's agenda.

Requested an update from Kiernan and Bergstrom on progress to date on the monitoring projects funded in FY 2007.

## **Environmental Monitoring Collaborative Briefing on CT FY 2007 monitoring investments**

### **Kiernan**

Reported that progress is being made on all the environmental monitoring work funded via the CT in 2006. DEM will spend funds assigned to the fixed-station network in the Bay on equipment replacement this winter in preparation for deployment during the 2007 season. USGS, NBC and DEM met to coordinate monitoring on the large rivers. A contract to resume monitoring water quality in the Blackstone and Pawtuxet Rivers will be developed and executed some time in December so that monthly monitoring will begin in January and run through June. Blackstone & Pawtuxet River effect contributions to upper bay. In response to questions about work being done in Massachusetts, DEM and USGS clarified what was under contract from MA and DEM will not duplicate that work in its contract with USGS. There is a water quality study and stream gauge-monitoring project being conducted by USGS for MA. They will be monitoring a station in Millville, Massachusetts, which is one of the Blackstone's long-term stations near Massachusetts Line. Emphasize that Rhode Island stream gauge stations are not replicating that work, just building around it and trying to stretch funds a bit farther. The USGS study is scheduled to end a year from now.

**Rotating Basin Approach** – DEM is continuing its partnership with URI on the monitoring of rivers and streams. The initiation of the third cycle was accomplished sometime in

September/October and includes subbasins for the S. Branch of the Pawtuxet River, Flat River, \_Big River & Queen's River. By monitoring the Queen's, DEM will have entirely assessed the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed. Data collection continues from now through next summer. There is an existing draft report from the first cycle under review; the second one is due by the end of the calendar year. Does not foresee any obstacles to complete the monitoring projects funded by the Coordination Team.

## **Colt**

Requested an update from Bergstrom on the Economic Monitoring Collaborative's FY 2007 project.

## **Economic Monitoring Collaborative**

### **Bergstrom**

Reported that the Economic Monitoring Collaborative had originally requested \$100,000 of which \$80,000 was to be funded by the Coordination Team, and \$20,000 provided in match by the Economic Policy Council. The project ended up receiving \$30,000 from the Coordination Team and \$20,000, in-kind support from the Economic Policy Council. The purpose of the current study was to do two things: Baseline marina industry assessment of size in terms of wages and jobs as well as some other key indicators for nine marine industry sectors; and, two baseline assessment of resource use both by business and recreational uses of bays and rivers. In addition, data will be collected, public investments and infrastructures over the last five years. The Collaborative went out to bid through the RFP process, and hired Kevin Hively as a consultant. Bergstrom feels work to be done will be leveraged, ending up with \$200,000 of value for \$50,000 of budget. There is about \$150,000 worth of recent data collection that Hively can tap into for this current survey. As indicated, they will not be able to capture any new data that can be collected in the summer because the project was not funded until early November. One of Hively's tasks will be to establish a menu of measures beyond jobs and wages that the Collaborative will then review and determine what they want to track on a long term basis. Hively is willing to take an action-oriented approach to this to determine what is available, what he has from previous studies, and what he is capable of doing for the Collaborative.

The Collaborative is planning a meeting with Hively in November to shape the monitoring effort and help it to move forward. In preparation for FY 2008 task development, the Collaborative can suggest the right interval of time but likely baseline measures should be conducted every two years. Two years from now, they would repeat the work they are doing in 2006-2007 because the numbers do not change fast enough for it to make sense to repeat measures at shorter time intervals. The Collaborative made an effort to compress current study time frame deliberately in order to have some results to show the General Assembly while they are considering they monitoring budget for FY 2008.

## Sullivan

Questioned which agenda topic was being addressed as the monitoring collaborative proposals were scheduled for discussion later in the meeting.

## Colt

Explained that he wanted to give each Collaborative an opportunity to provide a brief update while Sullivan was present since he needed to leave at 3:30 PM; but would be happy to alter the agenda and move into discussions for the FY 2008 proposals. Suggest that Bergstrom could turn to discussing the FY 2008 proposal that was put forward in relation to the FY 2007 proposal.

## Sullivan

Said that it is up to the Team. Stated that Sue Kieran has and will distribute what DEM and feels is lacking in the environmental monitoring collaborative proposal. Filling the monitoring gaps has been in his mind for some time, but it is brought even more to bear with Save the Bay issuing their Narragansett Bay Assessment Report. There is a segment on fisheries in the Save the Bay report, and to date he does not recall any CT discussions on fisheries monitoring. Fisheries monitoring also does touch upon some of Bergstrom's work with the Economic Monitoring Collaborative. Stated that he would continue to follow up with staff to look at the issues that "*we don't know*," and what are some budgetary and programmatic shortfalls anticipated in the next few years.

Again, in the context of the Save the Bay report, recreational fisheries health is significantly influenced by the bay's water quality. The public wants clear guidance or answers to basic questions that require knowledge of both the state of the fisheries and water quality: What fish species can I catch? Where can I dig for shellfish? What recreational and economic values derive from recreational fishing?

Sullivan predicted that within the next year, DEM's staff's best guess is that there will be funding shortfalls somewhere in the \$450,000 range for fisheries monitoring programs, including stock assessments, fisher surveys, and long-term fisheries recovery trends from both North Cape Spill of 1996 and other impacts such as lobster shell disease.

Sullivan continued by reporting on recent discussions at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission meeting in October concerning shellfish and their capacity to "filter" estuarine waters. Growing recognition of this potential water quality benefit of healthy, abundant shellfish stocks will lead to water quality management questions such as: *What would be the functional impact on water quality and bay ecology environment if a significant portion of the quahog stocks in the Providence River were removed?* And, *Would reducing the density*

*of quahog stocks in the Providence River improve their filtration capacity?* How should environmental and bay monitoring address such questions?

Similarly, there remain substantial issues regarding the management of recreational fishing in RI's waters. We know what he/she would like to catch, but we are not really managing fishery resources in relation to recreational fishing interests at this time. On the other hand, DEM has made significant investments into facilities that support the commercial fleet. But as a state we have not tried to explicitly balance fisheries management in relation to both commercial and recreational fishing. But we will be forced to do so soon given the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's recent decisions. At the October meeting fluke received a lot of attention. Currently, Rhode Island's allocation of summer flounder is 34 million pounds. This year there is discussion of reducing RI's allocation to 5.5 million and it is one of the most popular species for both the recreational angler and the near shore commercial fisher. What information is being collected by the Environmental and Economic Collaboratives that would help DEM fisheries managers address decisions to such a significant reduction in the total fluke allocation, particularly with regard to dividing that allocation between commercial and recreational fisheries? Having some economic sense as well as some political sense on what the true valuation of that is "damned important and we need it damned fast." The current monitoring proposals do not address collecting the types of information needed to support such allocation decisions. These are the kind of specific decisions that the CT needs to address as opposed to addressing broader long-term goals addressed by the Environmental and Economic Monitoring Collaboratives.

### **Bergstrom**

Bergstrom felt that the purpose of the Environmental Monitoring Collaborative is on water quality, not on recreational, nor even commercial uses of bay resources. The Economic Monitoring Collaborative's focus is distinct from that. It is on size and growth trends of the various clusters of the state's marine economy. There is this gray area of recreational use that they are doing some of, but not all of it. Bergstrom felt that they have to think more about how such monitoring needs will be integrated.

### **Sullivan**

Responded that his comments were not a criticism of the work Bergstrom and the Economic Monitoring Collaborative are advocating for; it was more of a challenge to CT.

## **Next Steps in CT Budget and Proposal Development**

### **Colt**

The Environmental Collaborative has its own agenda to move forward on as defined by the "Briefing Book" for FY 2008. There is nothing to prevent the CT from endorsing this proposal from the Collaborative while also endorsing with additional proposals to address specific monitoring needs that target urgent issues that must be dealt with soon. On the

economic side, the consultant hired by the Economic Monitoring Collaborative, Kevin Hively, is flexible, and we could provide him with specific instructions to pursue data on fisheries in the next couple of months to help with an urgent, time-sensitive issue such as dividing the state's fluke allocation between recreational and commercial fishers.

### **Bergstrom**

Another issue of concern regarding monitoring in general is lengthy delays between data collection and data publication. Stated that it would be worth doing a feasibility study in addition to the three proposals in front of them on possible means for improving the timeliness of data dissemination. Right now, given the slowness of data dissemination and analysis it is like driving a car looking in the rear view mirror. The data being collected by Hively and the Economic Monitoring Collaborative now is fresh, but a lot of the critical data that everyone is relying on is very old. For such data to be useful, it needs to be updated regularly.

### **Colt**

Asked Sullivan if there was a way to encapsulate his concerns regarding this and/or other pending fisheries management decisions in a concise description of a monitoring project that would provide relevant and currently lacking information that the CT could review and discuss?

### **Sullivan**

Stated that one of his concerns with in today's agenda, is that we cannot return to where the CT was about a year ago when it went through a similar proposal vetting process in part because it is unrealistic to request more than \$1 million in funding for all CT activities. For FY 2007 \$250,000 was allocated for monitoring from the OSPAR fund, which is dedicated as well to other management needs. To continue to use the OSPAR fund to underwrite monitoring or other CT activities is a bad idea because it will cause a failure in our to respond collectively to a future oil spill or other emergency. Feels there is a need for the CT to take a position on using the OSPAR fund for monitoring or other CT activities, ensuring that is not depleted, and not relying upon it on an indefinite basis.

He stated that the CT needs to target some clear and definitive 'fixes' of current problems, whether it is the issue of upper Narragansett Bay or the unique bind that we are in now as we seek to create urban waterfronts that somebody could stand along and say, isn't it pretty, but if they fell in we would have to send them to the hospital for treatment.

Sullivan also wanted a discussion as to the impact on waterfront redevelopment values of investments in water quality enhancement and more focused discussions on measurable achievements of collaboration within the CT, not just continuing current information exchange processes. Examples include how EDC and DEM interact on coordinated cleanups and management reevaluations. For example, Quonset Point is the state's economic development "jewel" It is Kaplan's responsibility to sell the place. It is Mariscal's

responsibility to make sure there is ample water supply to support economic development. It is DEM's responsibility to balance environmental protection and economic activities in establishing water quality standards for coastal waters surrounding Quonset Point. This seems to be a critical issue that the CT could focus on fixing. It will require legislative input and an explicit recognition of economic interests in establishing water quality standards. Addressing such an issue would be very different from the broad informational gathering that we have been focusing on in both Collaborative proposals.

### **Colt**

Expressed that he would love to see such "fix-it" projects identified. Nonetheless, we do have to assess the proposals in front of the CT. Maybe all we do is endorse them generally this month, but feels it is important to get this information on paper and define what our environmental and economic monitoring needs are as a whole, their costs, and then prioritize them as necessary based upon available funds. Maybe the CT wants to focus entirely on what are the problems that it can deal with on a coordinated basis in the short-term, and what it is going to take to deal with them. That is a whole separate proposal that we should be putting together along with the basic proposals from the two Collaboratives, the SAC and PAC.

### **Sullivan**

Wanted to make it abundantly clear that the Collaborative's report, as prepared, is the best that has been done. It is sound and well done, but there are immediate, tangible issues that it does not touch.

### **Kerr**

Also had some comments on this matter, was not sure if she could express them at this meeting, or should e-mail them.

### **Colt**

Responded that he would like to continue to receive written evaluations of the Environmental Monitoring Collaborative proposal. Feels it is a distinct piece, and the CT could help by adding the policy context to it.

### **Kiernan**

The Environmental Monitoring Collaborative met this fall, and boiled down its monitoring proposal to consist of a single page for each project in order to communicate them effectively, reiterating the priorities previously identified by the Collaborative based on the 2005 DEM Monitoring Report. Thus the proposal consists essentially of the same list of programs that had been put forth and prioritized last year. They have updated budget numbers and took into consideration recent progress and accomplishments. At the same time, the Collaborative did not discuss what is missing from the list; they did not open it up to other things that may need to be considered. It struck her that the fisheries piece was missing,

not because there was a conscious decision not to do it, but because it just did not enter the discussion at the very beginning. The other thing is that when you look at the statutory requirements for the Environmental Monitoring Collaborative, they indicated that the other items that are there are things being discussed today. Does feel that the marine fisheries have developed some information about that their needs are, that was not available two years ago. They would be happy to take up a discussion of fisheries and add it to the list. There is a Environmental Monitoring Collaborative meeting scheduled for later in November.

### **Sullivan**

Stated that if the CT were to endorse the concept of having the Environmental Monitoring Collaborative review the fisheries monitoring project and incorporate it into their priorities, he would be content for the moment.

Added that while the marine fisheries monitoring proposal represents the accepted approach to assessing fish stocks and trends, it is the integration of that data with economic data that is needed if management of marine recreational fisheries is the objective. We certainly need to coordinate the interests of CEM with broader economic and recreational interests; the Narragansett Bay Cooperative Project (Bay Window) is assessing as well the sociology of fish consumption and the healthfulness of it in many areas. And as he mentioned earlier, the Shellfish survey has an array of possible applications for water quality management, not just how many clams can be harvested

### **Kiernan**

Stated that the Marine Fisheries program at that time suggested a deficit of \$300,000 in monitoring needs.

### **Colt**

Asked that by the next meeting could we have the Collaborative sign-off on this marine fisheries section and that during that meeting we decide whether we are going to endorse the idea and submit it to the Governor for inclusion in the new budget. Colt stated he is still trying to feel out the process by which he puts together a proposal for incorporation into the Governor's budget. If we could just get the Collaborative proposals and related CT proposals from the PAC and SAC to where the CT is comfortable with them, the CT could then focus more on the "fix-it" theme that has been raised.

### **Kerr**

Inquired as to what is the appropriate forum for making additional comments?

### **Colt**



Responded that you can comment directly to the Collaborative or the Team. Again, the Collaborative has its own mandate; it is established as the Environmental Monitoring Collaborative.

### **Kerr**

Stated database capacity, making data available, should not be a separate project. It should be incorporated into each of the Monitoring Collaboratives' initiatives. Making data available should be extremely important to the CT. Kerr felt the Environmental Monitoring Collaborative should go back and look at this issue broadly. Perhaps it does not need to be a separate \$63,000 project, but it could be incorporated into each of the individual monitoring projects identified by the Monitoring Collaborative

### **Bergstrom**

Stated that he was not sure if Kerr is saying something different from what he meant earlier, but one thing to be considered is how fast they get their own data out. The process he was talking about was regarding whether it was possible for the federal government to get their data out.

### **Colt**

Felt that data dissemination is also an issue for the Coordination Team to address, that is something we can comment on and recommend targeted funding for in addition to try to get the collaborative to address this issue that we have struggled with as a state.

### **Mariscal**

General comment on Environmental Monitoring Briefing Book. Anticipated funds- Sometimes it is defined as to where they are anticipated to come from, sometimes it is not. Do they exist? We need to be sure that we all understand where the money is coming from.

### **Kaplan**

Agreed that this is an important point. Everyone is looking at this document as if it is the end-all, but it is actually the shortfall. The real starting point is the DEM matching strategy, assuming that it will be funded. If it is not funded, we are going to have a big shortfall. We do not really stress that everything is contingent on DEM funds.

### **Mariscal**

Stated that we need to tie all available funding sources for monitoring together. We cannot assume that DEM is going to continue to give/receive the same funding in FY 2008.

### **Kiernan**

Felt that the Collaborative has put this forward, and is hoping that this format would be useful as a way to simplify the descriptions for this program to go forward. If something like this is going to be included in the budget proposal, you must provide detailed budget information. Must consistently provide details. They did not feel they could include this on the one-pagers.

### **Colt**

Stated that certainly, the Team has not had enough time to look at these two proposals. Suggested that everyone is given a month to comment/work, send the comments to him and to each other. A goal will be set for the next meeting-endorsing the proposals as they stand as we see fit and incorporating them with additions or modifications into a white paper submittal to the Governor.

### **Kaplan**

Commented as someone who is looking at this from a new perspective. I was not part of the history that created these two Collaboratives, but one thing he would like to bring to the table today is that in moving forward as a CT must demonstrate that there is a sector of the state's economy for which an environmental monitoring capability or program allows us to measure variables important for the well-being of that sector. Kaplan sees in the Collaborative's proposal much needed environmental monitoring that is more general in nature, and not tied to specific economic activities. Then the Economic Monitoring Collaborative's proposal and current work trying to look at the whole landscape of the state's marine economy. Could we dive a little deeper, by trying to define what we mean by economic monitoring? For him, the biggest achievement will be when the CT can identify and pursue a project that will tie both monitoring efforts together. Here are economic activities, whether it is in the fisheries business, or the marine trades businesses-choose one and demonstrate that we can monitor it on an ongoing basis and reveal important relationships between the economic activity and environmental change. Kaplan does not see the coherent framework uniting the two independent monitoring activities.

### **Bergstrom**

Stated that concise data is necessary to establish such "intercepts" between environmental and economic monitoring.

### **Colt**

Felt that if the data is found and the time is invested that connections will begin to appear. It's difficult at this time, because they do not have the basic economic data to start with.

### **Bergstrom**

Agreed, stating that they do not have a good sense of both landscapes with a high-value, high-impact interception, and then you want to go deep on that to produce the concise data

you need to make the correct decision and see the relations between economy and environment.

**Colt**

Stated that they had all brought up an important issue, which we cannot forget. In terms the Environmental Monitoring Collaborative mandated responsibilities, it seems that we need to have the whole monitoring picture or strategy developed. Would it be possible for the Collaborative to have that ready to go by November, or possibly by the end of December? Feels it will definitely be needed at least by the end of December. What are the full costs? And what are the other sources you are assuming are there?

**Sullivan**

Asked if what Colt was also asking, what is the true cost of the Coordination Team? Sullivan felt at some point that needs to be shown, whether it is Colt's or Stanziale's salary, or office space? At some point, this needs to go before the General Assembly; they need to be able to see that as well.

**Colt**

Replied that is another issue. He was referring to the work of the Environmental Monitoring Collaborative. The total budget put forward by the Environmental Monitoring Collaborative equaling \$370,000. We do not need to know every single dollar of the \$370,000, but there are also the anticipated funds, as Mariscal said. *"What are the anticipated funds? When are they going to run out?"* Therefore, at least we can say, yes we have all the information and here is the front piece.

**Bergstrom**

Asked when the Governor needs our information for his process? What is our time frame?

**Colt**

Replied that at this time, he has not received guidance from the Governor's Office, other than it has to take the form of a "white paper." Colt was sent a two-year-old white paper as an example. He assumes this has to be completed by the end of November, or as soon as possible. It seems more important for it to be correct, than to adhere to a deadline.

**Bergstrom**

Asked what our total is as a placeholder.

**Colt**

Replied that he had no such guidance yet. He then turned to making a Powerpoint presentation on his current activities and work with the Northeast Regional Ocean Council. (His Powerpoint presentation has been added to these minutes)

### **CT Chair Progress Report**

#### **Regional Ocean Management: The Northeast Regional Ocean Council**

##### **Sullivan**

Stated that he wanted to emphasize that part of the reason why Colt was chosen was because of his background in ocean sciences qualify him to work on regional ocean management issues, work that is absolutely integral to the mission of the Coordination Team.

##### **Colt**

Continued to say that Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire at this point are very interested in, and felt we need to draw on New York

##### **Sullivan**

Added that the important thing, in terms of NOAA is that it has been given very high priority. Not long ago, a meeting was called in Boston, and every federal agency attended, and told to pay attention to this effort, and so it has also been highly prioritized with EPA New England.

##### **Colt**

Stated that if we can get a list of ocean management priorities together with specific plans for dealing with those priorities, and get that to the federal government soon, there is a good chance they will provide some funding.

##### **Bergstrom**

Stated that perhaps he can able to assist with New York, and asked to send him what you have on NROC.

Recommended re-convening the “ad-hoc working group to assess some the issues raised by the CT with regard to looking to real problems demanding on-the-ground solutions, as well as possibly addressing regional ocean management issues.

### **Land Use 2025: Policies and Plan**

The meeting then turned to K. Flynn’s presentation on Land Use 2025 Policies and Plan. His presentation can be found at:

<http://www.planning.ri.gov/landuse/presentation.pdf>

The following discussion ensued after Flynn's presentation:

### **Kaplan**

Asked if you accept the version of where the density should be, what does the land use map of 2025 show us? Where will the higher wage jobs be? If we are successful in 2025, the better jobs will be in the areas that are being shown as developed, - Residential - retail – commercial. Where will the jobs be? Stronger economy and land preservation together will determine the types of jobs in the state economy in 2025 and where they will be located. Must discuss where the jobs will be located, and the mix of jobs available in the state's economy, not just where people will live. What is the nature of the economy that we will have at that time? What does that mean in terms of locations where people will live and work? We tend to discuss land use planning without discussing jobs and economic development. You cannot map where people are working today and assume that is where they will be working in 2025. Then there are big issues around access to water and development near water, and then we are back to our earlier discussion regarding the integration of economic and environmental monitoring.

Further added that we should be having more such discussions in order to develop a capacity to model future scenarios, so that when a corporation comes in and says, "*We want to have a thousand-person campus where we can employ people for higher wages*" We need to know whether we are prepared as a state to identify clearly where they can invest in such a development. We may choose to decide that unless it fits neatly into the urban corridor identified in Land Use 2025, we are not interested.

### **Flynn**

Responded that is the Fidelity scenario. Fidelity is within the urban service of the area now. About fifteen years ago there was a discussion that neither you nor I were involved in. I am sure the discussion was held about where a company like Fidelity ends up. Would we ever say no to the next Fidelity?

### **Colt**

And if we are not going to say no, what can we do to mitigate the impact as much as possible?

### **Mariscal**

Added that one prime example, when we look around the state, certain parts of the state such as the Blackstone River valley area is water-rich.

**Spalding**

Added that two and one-half acre property has become unaffordable. Localization is creating very rich incomes that can afford more than two ½ acres. The middle class is caught in a nearly un-resolvable bind. There are 7 million people in South San Francisco Bay living on a bay about as long as Narragansett Bay, except we are thirty miles, they are forty miles. They have marshes that were not filled in for development, and instead became salt-making ponds, facilitating wetlands restoration today. All of these people piled into a valley. Its no longer a question of 2-½ acre lots because they have become unaffordable for the middle class. What we have, or what we have had is becoming uneconomical for large sectors of our population

**Flynn**

Replied that one could say that about what has been developing in the last four or five years, but that is still what is developing 2-1/2 acre lots are what the builders are continuing to target.

**Ciminero**

Added that this projection of high real estate values is based on recent years of rapid growth and development; but the housing market is cooling off considerably and that may trigger an economic recession. Does this forecast reflect any such restraints upon real estate prices?

**Flynn**

Replied that the Division of Planning also has an affordable housing plan. One of its recommendations is that if you look at the suburban strip zones, they often do not allow residential use even on upper stories. How you could redevelop a family strip mall to upper story residential? The concern is the residential development in the city of Providence over the last three years of about three thousand units is primarily very high-end and dense. In terms of not adding to sprawl, that trend is good. However, those units are meant for a market distinct from the one for people who are attracted to the relatively inexpensive 2-acre house lot in Richmond. Just because we are able to do redevelopment in Providence does not mean there will be a lessening of the land consumption on the fringes of the state's urban corridor.

**Mariscal**

Added that in the mid 1970's water quality protections advocated for large plots that in turn led to re-zoning and current sprawl development trends.

**Flynn**

Added that large lots were also promoted so that people would not contaminate their own wells with septic wastes.

**Kiernan**

Stated that once you get above two acres, larger lots due not increase water quality protections. We have been struggling at DEM about pollution spread through stormwater. The capacity for towns (rural) to invest in stormwater control programs is extremely limited. Furthermore, DEM is trying to push conservation development as a better choice, as opposed to clustering.

### **Bergstrom**

Stated that the areas least capable of dealing with storm water and development pressures are rural areas away from the coast; they cannot handle these issues on their own. One possible solution to that is what has happened on Cape Cod. They created the Cape Cod Commission, which has staff, authority, the ability to designate critical environmental areas, and a process for reviewing and directing development. We do not have such regional entities in RI.

### **Flynn**

Stated that the affordable housing plan described their needs to come up with such regional approaches but there is no money set aside for them.

### **Kiernan**

Stated that if we can improve regional land-use planning, we have a better chance of improving current environmental protections, and preventing future problems statewide.

### **Colt**

Suggested that these issues of regional growth management need to be formally addressed and incorporated into the forthcoming Systems Integration Plan.

### **Flynn**

Added that a primary concern of his is that local land use plans and development proposals are not reviewed by upper-level management in the responsible agencies when Division of Planning makes such review requests. For example, when Providence submitted a plan recently, DEM found it inadequate because it did not address endangered species. Such an evaluation results because, due to staffing shortages, the agencies tend to review by a checklist method. This type of cursory review needs to be corrected.

### **Colt**

Noted the time and requested a motion to adjourn.

So moved and seconded. Colt adjourned the meeting at 4 PM.